

Prisoner Reentry in Virginia

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Facts and Issues

Who are they? How many are there? And why should we care?

Where is the data?

- Virginia contracted, through the National Governors' Association, with the Urban Institute to develop a profile of offenders leaving prison
- Report will be released in next few weeks and will be available on the Secretary of Public Safety's website – publicsafety@virginia.gov.

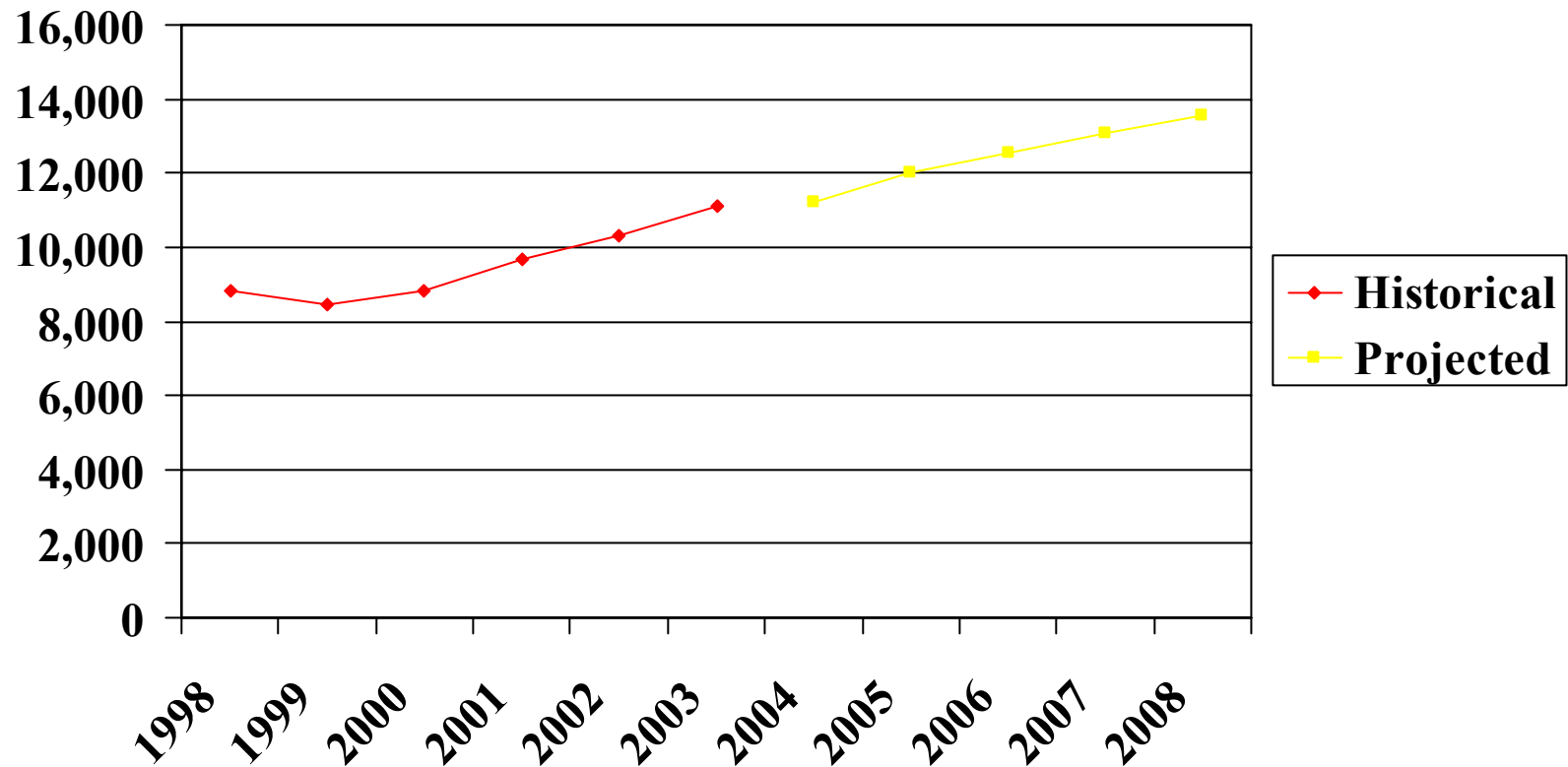
Who else cares about reentry?

- Virginia participated with 6 other states in a Reentry Policy Academy, established by the NGA's Center for Best Practices, trying to bring together the efforts of many groups with initiatives in this area
- Most states have initiated efforts to address the reentry problem – they face many of the same issues as Virginia
- Council of State Governments created the Reentry Policy Council, consisting of 100 state and local officials – their report is available at www.reentrypolicy.org.
- President Bush's Department of Justice is pursuing a reentry initiative – noted in the State of the Union speech
- The National Institute of Corrections, American Correctional Association, and many other organizations at the state, local and national levels have similar efforts

What do the Virginia numbers show?

- In FY 1998, 8,816 offenders were committed by the courts to the Department of Corrections
- In FY 2003, that number grew to 11,104 - average growth of 5.2% per year
- By FY 2008, that number is expected to grow to 13,759 – average growth of 4.4% per year

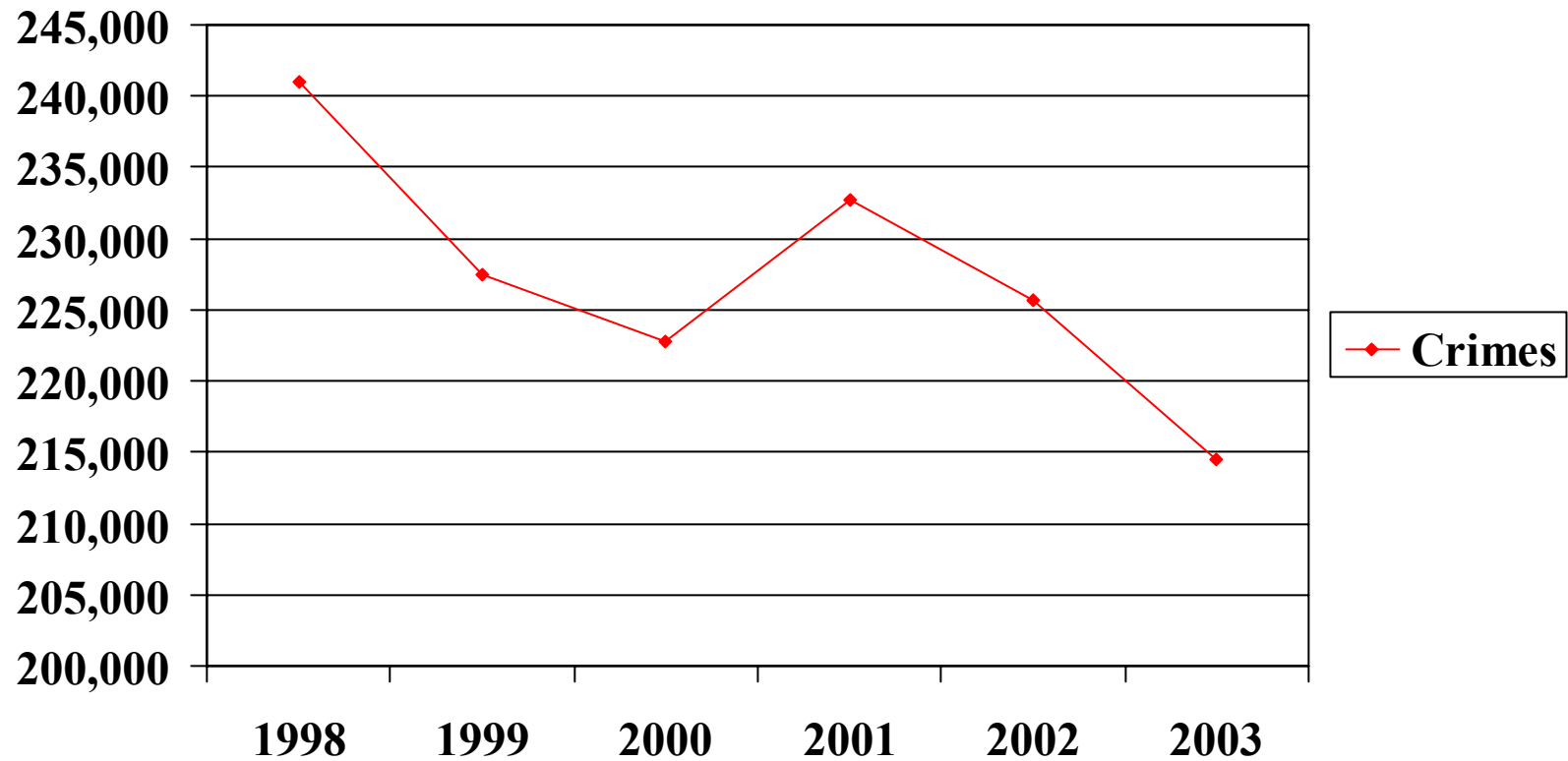
New court commitments to prison continue to grow



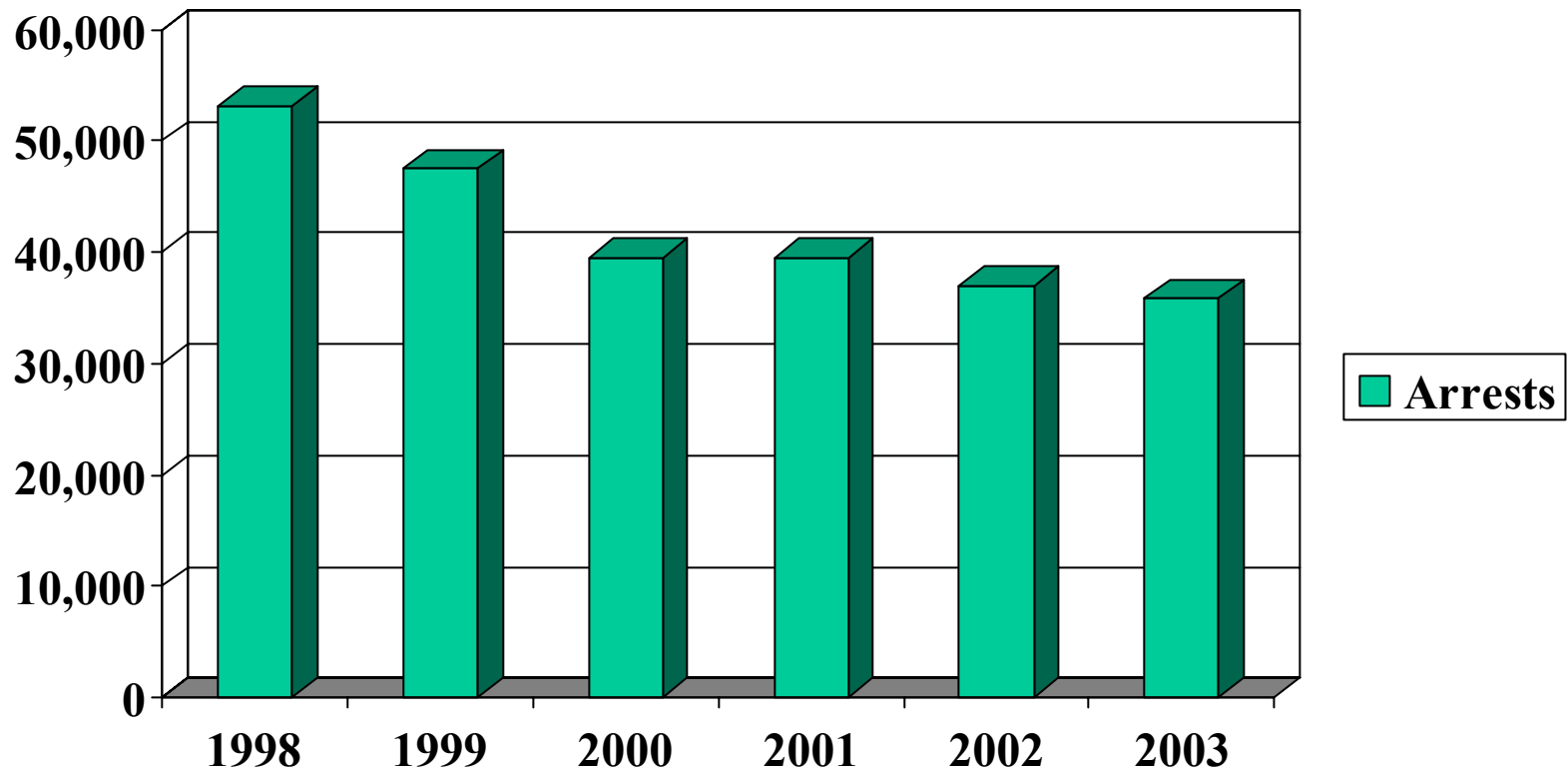
From 1998 to 2003 the number of
reported index crimes decreased by
11%

The number of arrests also declined

Total reported index crimes



Total index crime arrests



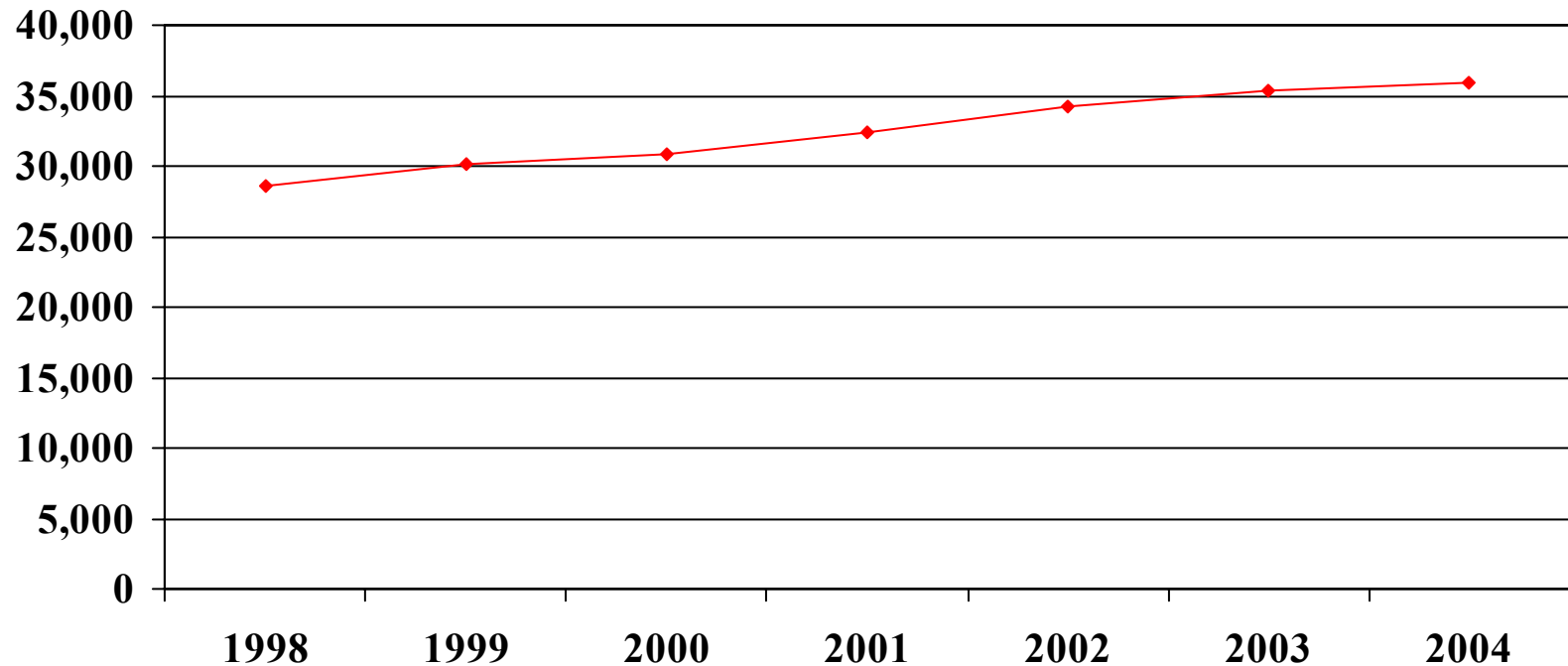
State Responsible (SR) inmate population

Between fiscal years 1998 and 2004 the SR
inmate population grew by 25%

Projections for 2005 through 2010 will be
completed by October 15

State Responsible Inmate Population

(FY2004 data is preliminary)



Females are increasing as a proportion of the prison population

- In 1998, women made up 6.2% of the prison population
- In 2003, they comprised 7.7% of the prison population

Why does the prison population grow at the same time that crime and arrests are decreasing?

- Average time served for those released in 1998 was 38 months
- Average time serviced for those released in 2003 was 44 months
- Increase in number of probation ‘technical violators’ (not included in crime or arrest statistics)

- Since 1994 sentencing reform, most offenders supervised after incarceration are on probation (suspended sentence) rather than parole
- In 1998, 30.9% of state inmates had been in prison before
- In 2003, 32.5% of state inmates had prior prison records
- Under sentencing guidelines, repeat offenders generally receive longer sentences than first time offenders

What does the Urban Institute
Report tell us about who was
released from prison?

(Report uses data from calendar year 2002)

In 2002, 9,960 inmates were released from prison

(10,635 were released in 2003)

- 36% were Caucasian
- 63% were African-American
- The average age at time of release was 34.7 years
- More than half had never been married

What was the crime for which they had been incarcerated?

- 52% had been convicted of a non-violent offense
- 25% had been convicted of a drug offense
- 23% had been convicted of a violent offense

Note – this represents the offenses for which they were most recently incarcerated, and does not include any prior criminal history

For those released from prison in 2002:

- 9% had previously been incarcerated for a felony at least 2 times before
- 19% had been incarcerated once before for a felony conviction
- 72% had not been incarcerated for a felony prior to their current sentence

(Does not include prior convictions for which there was no prison time)

- 52% entered prison without a high school diploma or GED
- 13.6% had no prior history of employment

- Three of four had a history of alcohol or drug abuse
- 19% had been diagnosed with a chronic or communicable disease
- An estimated 15% had some form of mental illness or mental disorder

What programs did they participate in while incarcerated?

➤ 46% participated in either academic or vocational programming

➤ 64.3% participated in some form of substance abuse treatment or education:

- 34.8% in education
- 17.7% in support programs (such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous)
- 11% in a therapeutic community program
- 1% in counseling

To what communities did they return?

- 8% returned to Norfolk
- 7% returned to Richmond City
- 5% returned to Newport News
- 4% returned to Virginia Beach
- 4% returned to Fairfax County
- 4% returned to Henrico County

What does the future hold?

- Unless we change the way we plan and carry out reentry strategies, we will see continued growth in the numbers of offenders returned to prison
- The prison population will continue to increase at current rates
- Based on current trends, commitments to prison will grow an average of 4% per year

What is the cost of maintaining the prison population?

- Total operating cost for the Department of Corrections is \$1.7 million this biennium
- Does not include the costs of housing state inmates in local jails
- Does not include the costs of Correctional Education
- Does not include the costs of services provided to offenders by Community Services Boards, local Departments of Social Services, Housing, Rehabilitation, non-profit and faith based organizations, etc.

What does the increased population add to that cost?

- The current capital budget includes \$196.6 million for new prison construction
- Debt service for these prisons will be about \$36 million in each of the next 10 biennia
- Operating costs for these prisons will add about \$60 million each year once they open
- Additional prison construction will be required if growth continues
- *A 1,000 bed medium security prison costs \$70 million to construct and costs more than \$20 million per year to operate*